

austerities which always include much cold-water bathing. But the most curious phase of this Shinto ascetism is represented by a custom still prevalent in remote districts. According to this custom a community yearly appoints one of its citizens to devote himself wholly to the gods on behalf of the rest. During the term of his consecration this communal representative must separate from his family, must not approach women, must avoid all places of amusement, must eat only food cooked with sacred fire, must abstain from wine, must bathe in fresh cold water several times a day, must repeat particular prayers at certain hours, and must keep vigil upon certain nights. When he has performed these duties of abstinence and purification for the specified time he becomes religiously free, and another man is then elected to take his place. The prosperity of the settlement is supposed to depend upon the exact observance by its representative of the duties prescribed ; should any public misfortune occur, he would be suspected of having broken his vows. Anciently, in the case of a common misfortune, the representative was put to death/'¹

676. Development of the arts. Luxury. Sensuality. In the development of the arts there has been an increase of luxury in the ways of living. This has seemed to be a good. It has seemed like successful accomplishment of what man must do to win and enjoy power over nature. Luxury, however, has brought vice and ill, and has wrought decay and ruin. It is the twin sister of sensuality, which is corruption. Is luxury a good or not ? Men have lost faith in it, and have declared that the triumphs of the arts were delusions, " snares to the soul," corruption of the indi-

vidual and society. They have turned back to the "old simple ways," and have renounced the enjoyments which were within their reach by the power of the arts. Such renunciation has always been popular. The crowd has always admired it. It is certainly a noteworthy feature in the history of civilization that there has always been present in it a reaction, a movement of fear and doubt about the innovations of every kind by which it is attended, which has caused sects of philosophers and

0/dw, 165.